

## JOHN JACOB ASTOR SHORT OF MONEY?

Tax Commissioners Surprised at the Amount of His Personal Property.

He Is Said to Have Taken Oath to Owning Not More Than \$250,000 Worth.

MUCH LESS THAN OFFICIAL VALUE.

The Furnishings, Works of Art and Other Contents of His Magnificent House Had Been Estimated at Something Like \$3,000,000.

John Jacob Astor has grown woefully poor in personal property during the past year, it is said—so much so that the Tax Commissioners are reported to have expressed surprise. The idea that Mr. Astor might, perchance, be forced to borrow in order to pay the city the money due him has been freely talked about.

This year Mr. Astor pleads guilty to owning only \$250,000 worth of personal property. Last year he was worth ten times as much, admitted the fact and paid taxes on it. Some people are harsh enough to say that Mr. Astor has between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000 worth of furniture, paintings, statuary and bric-a-brac in his house at Fifth avenue and Sixty-fifth street, and say that they believe it is still there, despite the fact that he declares he is worth only \$250,000, aside from his real estate holdings. They say they do not think that Mr. Astor has pawned this property or sold it or given it away. That the big building at Fifth avenue and Sixty-fifth street contains the same works of art, the ownership of which has tended to make Mr. Astor famous, is considered a certainty by society people. They also say that his horses and carriages have given no evidence that his bank account has been so greatly diminished within the last few months.

When the deputies went from the Tax Commissioner's office last September and began to estimate the valuation of Mr. Astor's property, it is said they decided to place the figures at a slight increase over those of last year. This would make Mr. Astor worth about \$3,000,000 in cash, jewelry and household property. The figures did not create any excitement among the Tax Commissioners. Indeed, the latter thought the amount was about right and had it entered upon the books.

ASTOR'S OWN ESTIMATE.

The surprise came later, however. According to the routine of the office a notice was sent to Mr. Astor, telling him of the value that had been placed on his personal property, and instructing him, if he desired to make any corrections, to appear at the office of the commissioners between 10 o'clock in the morning and 2 in the afternoon any week day and make oath as to the real value. Mr. Astor wasted no time in visiting the commissioners. Bright and early one morning he appeared before the Board and on oath stated that his personal property was worth only \$250,000 on January 13 last, the day on which the law says a taxpayer's holdings shall be determined. The plea of comparative poverty startled the commissioners. Neither President Barker nor Mr. Sutro nor Mr. Whalen could account for the remarkable decrease in value. Mr. Astor, it is said, explained that he had recently been making large purchases of real estate in the annexed district, and this, with the extension he is building to the Waldorf, had caused him to run low in the matter of pocket money and bank account. As the statement was made on oath, the commissioners, perforce, accepted it.

But in his explanation, it is said, Mr. Astor made no statement of what had become of the paintings, statuary and tapestries which have made his Fifth avenue house famous. This collection is said to be second to none in the country, and to surpass even that of Cornelius Vanderbilt. Its value is estimated at \$2,000,000, and many people think it is worth twice as much. The commissioners did not say if they did they did not think it. As a consequence, he will get off with taxes on only \$250,000.

POORER PEOPLE GRUMBLE.

Some people who have not "sworn off" their taxes are not at all pleased with the idea that Mr. Astor should escape so easily. They say that he is the owner of the splendid collection at his Fifth avenue house, and that his mother has nothing to do with it, her wants being met by a yearly allowance granted under the will of her late husband. Mr. Astor's sisters, with the exception of Mrs. Coleman Drayton, were treated in the same way. Mrs. Drayton was given a large sum, and has no further claim upon the estate. As a consequence, it is said, the title to the personal property is in John Jacob Astor's name.

The members of the Board of Tax Commissioners refused to accept the law yesterday. They said the information given them was declared confidential by the courts, and that they have no right to make it public until July 1, when their books will be turned over to the Board of Aldermen. They explained, however, how it is that a man's personal property may suddenly disappear.

"A man may have \$2,000,000 in personal property to-day," said President Barker, "and yet have none three months from now and still be richer than ever. He may have drawn all his cash from the bank and invested it in bonds or real estate. That relieves him from a personal property tax. The Astors are continually investing in land in this city, and this may account for the change in Mr. Astor's taxable property. I do not say that it does, but it may."

**A PERILOUS UNDERTAKING.** Next Sunday's Journal how two hare-brained mariners are to cross the ocean in a small open boat under extraordinary circumstances. Order now from your newsdealer, or you will miss it, as many did last Sunday.

**P. MORGAN WANTS TO JOIN.**

He Applies for Membership in the Commercial Travellers' Association. Binghamton, N. Y., Feb. 28.—Secretary S. D. W. Cleveland, of the Commercial Travellers' Association of America, this morning received an application for honorary membership from P. Morgan, a New York banker, accompanied by a generous check and Mr. Morgan's best wishes for the Home project. Mr. Morgan's check is one of the largest ever received by the association for honorary membership.

## TISSUES PHOTOGRAPHED.

A Boston Doctor's Recent Tests Demonstrated the Power of a Faradic Battery in Casting X Rays.

Boston, Feb. 28.—That the softer tissues of the human body can be successfully photographed by means of a Faradic battery has been demonstrated by Dr. H. L. Smith, of Newbury street.

The results thus far obtained by him seem to prove that more powerful X rays are obtained from a Faradic battery than the Crookes tube. Hitherto it has been possible, through the medium of the vacuum tube, to obtain only shadowgraphic effects of bones.

A recent experiment made by Dr. Smith showed internal organs of his own body, and as he declared, clearly proved the value of future experiments of the kind would be in surgery.

Rochester, N. Y., Feb. 28.—Professor Lawrence, of the University of Rochester, has been making experiments with the X ray process of photography. In the present instance Dr. Lawrence yesterday a bullet, which had been lodged in the bones of the hand of John Laut, a tinsmith, was located and extracted. The tinsmith was tied down with a broad piece of board and exposed to the rays for thirty minutes. The result showed that the bullet had penetrated to the centre of the hand, an inch above the wrist.

## HE MUST SIT IN THE CHAIR.

Wife Murderer Hermann Ordered to Pay the Penalty in April Next.

Louis P. Hermann, who was convicted of wife murder, was sentenced to die during the week beginning April 20, by Justice Keogh in the Criminal Branch of the Supreme Court yesterday. Lawyer Penell claimed that the conviction and sentence were invalid, as Justice Keogh, who presided, was not a Justice of the Peace, but a Justice of the Second Department, and could not sit in the First Department.

Hermann killed his young wife on July 17, 1894, at No. 294 West Hundred and Fifth street, because she refused to live with him. He taxed her with being unfaithful. She replied him after his release from the penitentiary, where he had been for a year.

## DEVERY TO BE TRIED MARCH 9.

Indictments Against Other Policemen May Be Dismissed.

The trial of Police Captain William S. Devery, charged with accepting a bribe from Francis M. Searis, was set by Justice Keogh yesterday to begin on March 9 in the criminal branch of the Supreme Court. At the same time District Attorney Fellows consulted with Justice Keogh about the indictments pending against Police Captain Devery and other policemen. Henry Schell, who were indicted upon the evidence of Jared Flagg, Jr.

## THOUGHT THE MAYOR NICE.

Yet the Bride Was Nervous at the Suggestion of a Kiss.

A marriage ceremony was performed by the Mayor in his office yesterday morning. The groom was Leon Kronfeld, of No. 223 West Thirty-seventh street. He said he was an Austrian by birth and a musician by profession. His age was twenty-six, and he said he had been married before and divorced. Louisa Grabbie, the bride, is from Davenport, Ia. She said it was her first marriage. She was twenty-five years of age and was lighted up with a candle, until it was suggested that the Mayor might kiss her. She thought it was a very nice fellow, and she said after the ceremony, "and that made me nervous. He's quite nice, though."

## "BILL" NYE'S LAST STORY.

Written for the Journal just before the great humorist died. Published only in next Sunday's Journal.

## FOR BETTER LIGHT ON THE "L."

Aldermen Will Almost Certainly Indorse Coggeshall's Bill.

To hasten the better lighting of the Manhattan Elevated Railroad cars the Board of Aldermen will, next Tuesday, pass a resolution indorsing the Coggeshall bill, now in the State Senate, which calls for an improved system of illumination on all the "L" roads.

Alderman B. E. Hall said yesterday that the people had tolerated the malodorous, miserable system as long as they could. The time had come when demand decent treatment for the hundreds of thousands of people who are compelled to use "L" cars at night.

## THREW QUEST DOWNSTAIRS.

Rose Taylor Inflicts Serious Injury on Frankie Stevens.

Frankie Stevens, of No. 253 West Forty-sixth street, visited Rose Taylor, a colored woman, in her rooms at No. 127 West Twenty-seventh street, yesterday morning. The women spent their time until noon drinking and then fought. The Taylor woman drove her guest into the hall and pushed her down a flight of stairs. The Stevens woman's right leg was broken and she was removed to the New York Hospital. The police could not find the Taylor woman.

## CITY BRIEFS.

The tin shop of Matthias Kleins in the rear of No. 52 Bowers was damaged by fire Thursday night to the extent of \$2,000.

Yankee Michael and Vic Jannepp, of No. 241 East Tenth street, was arrested yesterday charged with robbing Collette's barber shop at No. 314 West Tenth street.

Thomas Maher was in the Harlem Court yesterday on complaint of Herman Harvey, a suddenly despatched, charged with passing checks. The case was postponed and Maher was held in default of \$1,000 bond.

The police received word yesterday to notify Charles Blaker, Sixth avenue decorator, that his son, August Blaker, had died suddenly in Philadelphia. The father has not been located.

Colonel A. C. Fisk, of Dever, president of the American Bismillah League, will discuss "The Finance and Transportation Question" before the North Side Bismillah Club at the avenue and One Hundred and Forty-ninth street, tomorrow evening.

John Kelly, aged twenty, of No. 16 First street, is held at the Tombs at the request of Central Office Detective O'Leary and Downing during the night of July 19 and 20, charged with implicating him in a recent robbery.

John Mead, who says he is from Pittsburgh, was arrested yesterday for stealing a car. He was charged with the theft of a Westchester car, a 1900 model, which he had stolen from a garage on West 107th street, and was valued at \$7,000 worth of cash by theft.

The police of the Oak Street Police Station on Thursday night raided the liquor store of Angelo Patrino, at No. 36 Jackson street, as an alleged disorderly house. The proprietor, ten men and three women were taken into custody. Two small boys found in the place were turned over to the agents of the Gery Society, and yesterday in the Central Court, Patrino was held in \$500 bail for keeping a disorderly house.

George Ziegar has been appointed by Civil Justice Joseph P. Fallon stenographer in the Ninth District Court to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Edward M. Ryan. The salary is \$2,000.

Twenty Dollars for Mrs. McCarthy. Mrs. McCarthy, of No. 100 West 100th street, has received \$20 from John B. for the widow of James McCarthy, who recently shot and killed himself. The money has been sent to Mrs. McCarthy, but through an oversight the acknowledgment was not made at the time.

## TOMKINS CAN'T HAVE THE BODILY HOUSE.

He Loses His Suit in the Supreme Court Against Mrs. Mary L. Seaton.

The "Big Boarder's" Story of the Use of His Persuasive Powers on the Preacher.

## MRS. SCHREIBER'S STORY OF A KICK.

She Went to Help Her Daughter Against Tomkins, but Concluded to Get Out of the Way "To Give Them Room."

The Rev. George Tomkins and Mary L. Seaton for possession of the boarding establishment known as "The Seaton," located at Nos. 400 and 411 West Fifty-seventh street, which he claimed under a contract of sale alleged to have been made in July, 1894, and for which he was to pay \$6,000. This contract, he alleges, Mrs. Seaton stole and then evicted him after he had paid \$1,200 of the purchase price.

After the lawyers had summed up yesterday afternoon Justice Maclean decided promptly that the Rev. George Tomkins could not have the boarding house Nos. 400 and 411 West Fifty-seventh street, for possession of which the preacher sued Mrs. Mary L. Seaton in Part V. Supreme Court, Special Sessions. He ordered Mr. Tomkins's contract voided, and a 5 per cent extra allowance. Additional light was thrown on the looting of Rev. George Tomkins's hat box and the alleged kicking of Mrs. Mary L. Seaton. Mrs. Dora E. Schreiber, seventy-six years old, the mother of Mrs. Seaton, told what she knew of a midnight raid in September, 1894, when it was alleged Mr. Tomkins's contract was stolen.

"When my child went into the room I remained in the hall," she said. "Why did you not go in?" "Because I feared Mr. Tomkins might kick me." "Did he ever kick you?" "He did not." "Did you see him kick Mrs. Seaton?" "Yes, I did. She fell into my arms down in the basement hall, when he kicked her." "How did you happen to be in the basement?" "I ran on ahead."

"What for?"

"To make room for them."

"Was Mr. Tomkins chasing Mrs. Seaton?"

"He was."

"Why were you not in bed at that late hour, as old ladies usually are?"

"It is my locked door."

"When do you usually go to bed?"

"When I get ready. It was my duty to be up that night protecting my daughter."

"Did you not go to bed?"

"I didn't want to get kicked."

"After the exchange took place in the management while the preacher was supposed to be in charge the old lady was excited. Mr. Tomkins was recalled."

"Do you remember the night of September 17?" he was asked.

"Only too well. I was in bed fast asleep when my daughter came into my room."

"What did she do?"

"Turned up the gas. I begged her to go outside while I dressed, but instead of that she said, 'I will stay here with you. Some of them she threw out of the window.'"

"When did you kick her?"

"I never did such a thing."

"Was Mrs. Seaton's mother there?"

"She was not. While I was in the yard picking up my papers I saw the old lady at her bedroom window."

"Did you chase Mrs. Seaton downstairs?"

"She told me to go. I saw the old lady at her bedroom window."

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## BRAIN PHOTOGRAPHING.

Dr. Kolbe, of Brooklyn, Will To-night Experiment on a Boy's Head to Prove Edison's Theory.

Dr. F. S. Kolbe, of No. 701 Fourth avenue, Brooklyn, will make another attempt to-night to photograph by means of X rays the brain of a living person. Dr. Kolbe has made five plates of the head. In each case the result has been more promising than the preceding effort. The last attempt made two days ago demonstrated what Mr. Edison has claimed—that the rays would not only penetrate flesh, but would go through bone, providing the fluorescence was strong enough.

The proof of this is the plate made two days ago, after an exposure of one hour and thirty minutes with a Crookes tube lighted with a fluorescence of 20,000 volts. The subject upon whose brain the doctor made the attempt is a twelve-year-old boy. The little fellow's head was placed directly between the tube and the plate holder. Tied to his head on the side nearest the plate holder was a piece of lead about three inches square. When, after an hour and a half, the plate was developed, the shape of the head was found to be shown by a shadow. The cartilage of the nose had not cast any shadow, but the nasal bone was found to be very distinct.

On Tuesday about the eyes were much lighter than the rest of the shadows. The volume of the lead was not as distinctly marked as it might have been, but the deep shadow left no doubt that the rays had done what Mr. Edison had said they would do if the proper conditions were obtained.

To-night, when Dr. Kolbe will make his experiments, instead of using a lead plate, a steel key will be placed between the boy's head and the plate holder. In a few minutes the first skeleton of the human frame made in this country.

Dr. Kolbe said yesterday: "I believe as soon as we learn how to focus the X rays properly we shall be able to not only obtain a photograph of the bones, but will be able to obtain photographs of the organs of the body as well. As far as photographing the brain is concerned, I may never be able to get a photograph of the lobes of the brain, but I will show that the rays will penetrate the bone and pass through it."

## COAL COMBINE AROUSED.

Anti-Trust Bills Favorably Reported in the Assembly, and They Will Fight Them.

Albany, N. Y., Feb. 28.—The anti-trust bills were reported favorably in the Assembly this morning and advanced to third reading. Mr. Robinson, who is chairman of the committee which made the report, had the bills advanced without opposition. They are now in a position to be passed by the Assembly early next week.

It was announced during the day that these bills would be up for a hearing before the Senate Committee on Judiciary next Tuesday. Mr. Robinson, who is chairman of the committee which made the report, had the bills advanced without opposition. They are now in a position to be passed by the Assembly early next week.

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